

CLAIMS

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for emulating a surface electrocardiogram (EKG) of a patient in which an implantable cardiac stimulation device is implanted, the method comprising:

sensing a cross-chamber cardiac signal using an atrial electrode and a ventricular electrode;
distinguishing portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal corresponding to atrial signals from those corresponding to ventricular signals; and
adjusting the relative amplitudes of the portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal corresponding to atrial signals and the portions corresponding to ventricular signals so as to yield an emulated surface EKG.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein adjusting the relative magnitudes of the portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal is performed to yield a predetermined ratio of atrial peak signal amplitude to ventricular peak signal amplitude.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the predetermined ratio is in the range of 1:4 to 1:10.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein distinguishing portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal corresponding to atrial signals from those corresponding to ventricular signals comprises identifying transition points between atrial signals and ventricular signals within the cross-chamber cardiac signal.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein identifying transition points between atrial signals and ventricular signals comprises:

- identifying a pair of ventricular depolarization and repolarization events within the cross-chamber cardiac signal;
- scanning the cross-chamber cardiac signal prior to the ventricular depolarization event to find a baseline point to serve as a first transition point; and
- scanning signals sensed following the ventricular repolarization event to find a nearest baseline point to serve as a second transition point.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein identifying transition points between atrial signals and ventricular signals comprises:

- identifying a pair of ventricular depolarization and repolarization events within the cross-chamber cardiac signal;
- scanning the cross-chamber cardiac signal prior to the ventricular depolarization event to find a baseline point to serve as a first transition point;
- determining the R-R interval for the immediately preceding heart beat;
- calculating a time delay value based on the R-R interval using a programmable factor; and
- identifying a second baseline point based upon the time-delay value and the ventricular depolarization event.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising controlling device functions based, in part, on the emulated surface EKG.

8. The method of claim 1 performed entirely by the implantable medical device.

9. The method of claim 1 performed by the implantable medical device in combination with a device external to the patient and further comprising transmitting the cross-chamber cardiac signal to the external device and wherein the steps of distinguishing portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal and adjusting the relative amplitudes of the portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal so as to yield an emulated surface EKG is performed by the external device.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the atrial electrode is selected from the following group: right atrial (RA) tip, RA ring, superior vena cava (SVC) coil, left atrial (LV) ring and LV coil and wherein the ventricular electrode is selected from the following group: right ventricular (RV) tip, RV ring, RV coil, left ventricular (LV) ring.

11. A system for emulating a surface electrocardiogram (EKG) of a patient in which the device is implanted, the system comprising:
sensing circuitry operative to sense a cross-chamber cardiac signal using an atrial electrode and a ventricular electrode; and
an EKG emulation unit operative to distinguish portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal corresponding to atrial signals from those corresponding to ventricular signals and to adjust the relative amplitudes of the portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal corresponding to atrial signals and the portions corresponding to ventricular signals so as to yield an emulated surface EKG.

12. A system for emulating a surface electrocardiogram (EKG) of a patient in which the device is implanted, the system comprising:
- means for sensing a cross-chamber cardiac signal using an atrial electrode and a ventricular electrode;
 - means for distinguishing portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal corresponding to atrial signals from those corresponding to ventricular signals; and
 - means for adjusting the relative amplitudes of the portions of the cross-chamber cardiac signal corresponding to atrial signals and the portions corresponding to ventricular signals so as to yield an emulated surface EKG.